

2 SPIRIT OF THE PRESS.

EDITORIAL OPINIONS OF THE LEADING JOURNALISTS UPON CURRENT TOPICS—COMPILED WEEKLY FOR THE EVENING TELEGRAPH.

The Nomination of Grant.

From the N. Y. Nation. The humiliating experience which this country has had on two occasions of a President who deserted the party by which he was elected, and strove to create a new party devoted to his personal interests, has made all men of decided political convictions justly cautious of being again caught in the same snare.

The particular men who frame a party platform may be utterly insincere; but the people for whose satisfaction it is made must generally believe in it, or it would not be supported by politicians. This is true even of a platform like that of the Whigs in 1852, which was despised by a majority of the party in the Northern States.

Not only is there a strong feeling in opposition to all attempts to organize a personal party, there is a great deal of doubt among earnest members of the Republican party as to the policy of nominating a candidate not unequivocally identified with its past history.

In the first place, it should be borne in mind that it has always been a Vice-President, never an elected President, who has betrayed the confidence of his party so far as to show any tendency to go over to its adversary.

He is never a man who has had any reason to imagine that he could be a successful candidate for the Presidency, and he imagines as well as any one that he is nominated for the Presidency because he is not deemed worthy, either then or ever, to be President.

In the next place, the three Presidents who disappointed the expectations with which they were nominated were all notable politicians, whose past record was well known, and whose speeches had been quite as frequent as was desirable.

Mr. Tyler had been in the Senate, as well as in other departments of public life, before his nomination as Vice-President. Mr. Fillmore had been the leader of his party in the House of Representatives. Mr. Johnson had, as is now pretty generally known, filled every office in the gift of the people, from alderman to senator.

But again, it must be considered that only Messrs. Tyler and Johnson actually deserted their party; and that these men were both committed by their past record against the measures to which their party was inclined, while they had never recanted their former doctrines.

litical history of the former is less familiar to Americans than any other part of his life, and it may, therefore, not be known to all our readers that he commenced his administration as a very moderate Federalist, striving to hold the balance between the rival parties, and eventually became a decided supporter of Federal doctrines, doing more for the party than was expected of him at his election.

Had he lived through his term, it is almost certain that the infamous Fugitive Slave bill could never have passed, and that Texas would have received no bribe to induce her to surrender New Mexico, while it is not improbable that Southern treason would have been sternly crushed by a Southern man.

Applying these lessons of history to the political affairs of the present day, it appears to us that the masses of the Republican party desire a guarantee that the work of reconstruction upon the basis of equal suffrage shall be carried on to success, yet in such a spirit of moderation as shall ensure good government, and prevent the unchecked supremacy of either race at the South over the other.

The majority of the party, in short, want to establish equality at the South—not to give dominion to either side. A large and important minority would prefer to leave a qualified and carefully restrained dominion to the white race exclusively; while there is but a very small minority in favor of giving exclusive dominion, or anything equivalent to it, to the negro race.

General Grant is in a position of great delicacy, and one in which he can better serve his country than he can as a mere candidate for the Presidency. He is in command of the army, subject to the President, and to him only. We would be desirous of seeing him enter into conversation for the purpose of indicating his opposition to the policy of his superior officer.

But whenever, in the course of regular duty, General Grant has had occasion to express an opinion, his sentiments have proved satisfactory. His views upon the admission of the Southern States, in 1865, were not entirely in harmony with those of the Republican party in 1866; but upon the aspect of affairs, as he then saw them, a majority of the party would probably have agreed with him.

Again, there is no successful general of the war, still in service, to whom the same objections, or more serious ones, could not be made. Yet what radical Republican has had reason to complain of Thomas, Sheridan, or Schofield? There seems to be something in their vocation which makes real soldiers more obedient to the people, and more faithful to the spirit of the nation, than other classes of public men.

We have no such absolute faith in General Grant as would lead us to favor his nomination independent of party, or without any distinct enunciation of principles. He must, when the proper time arrives, be put upon a sound political platform, and must stand there. Much will depend upon the men who gather round him, and upon his own opinion of their relative values.

One consideration we must add before closing. It would be an excellent thing to have a President without a policy. It is the business of Congress to frame a policy, and the business of the President to execute it. For many years the opposite theory has prevailed, and has led to boundless corruption. It is the fact that a policy is the President's own, or that he thinks so, which makes him so anxious to bribe men into its support.

Reconstruction—A Point Gained.

From the N. Y. Times.

There is hope for reconstruction—Mr. Thaddeus Stevens, though not victorious, has accepted an ultimatum and is satisfied. The measure passed on Wednesday, divested of Mr. Stevens' method of increasing the Southern representation, received the unbroken Republican vote in the House, and goes to the Senate with a fair chance of speedy enactment.

The circumstances are rendered additionally significant by the causes which produced it. Mr. Stevens would probably not desire to have it understood that he voluntarily accepted his position, or acquiesced in rational views because of their superiority.

The party is then once more united on ground controlled by the moderate element, which has thus again proved its ability and right to dictate the policy by which the party shall be estimated.

It is not unreasonable to suppose that the present attitude of the party, as indicated by the action of the House on Wednesday, has been in some degree influenced by recent manifestations of Northern opinion. The Republican majority have learned from Mr. Johnson's experience the folly of attempting to cultivate crochets and persevere in prejudices in defiance of public opinion.

From this assumed relation of cause and effect, we derive the hope that the good sense and moderation of the party will be further shown when the results of the conventions and the subsequent voting shall be brought before Congress as the high court of revision. The same spirit which has now restrained Mr. Stevens will then find useful exercise in pruning, correcting, perhaps in liberalizing the constitutions framed by the conventions.

For this ultimate test of republican statesmanship we wait patiently, with an expectation strengthened by the course now taken by Congress on the subject.

General Grant's Reticence.

From the N. Y. World.

"I will not give you reason to imagine that I think my sentiments of such value as to wish myself to be solicited about them. They are of too little consequence to be very anxiously either communicated or withheld." Thus wrote the greatest philosophical statesman of modern times (or of any time), in the opening sentences of his most celebrated production.

The reticence of General Grant, which he alike solicitation and artifice, must stand on other reasons than the value of what it so sedulously protects from the profanation of public knowledge. It is possible that he feels the iniquity of his countrymen because he considers their curiosity as impertinent; but this theory is not without its difficulties.

By telegraph from the N. Y. Times. On the 20th of August, the following telegram was received from Mr. Stanton, Attorney-General of the United States, to the Hon. Thaddeus Stevens, Chairman of the Committee on Reconstruction, House of Representatives, New Orleans, La.: "I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 17th inst., and in reply to inform you that the same has been forwarded to the proper authorities for their consideration."

General Grant) so exceptional as to impose upon him this studied and stubborn silence on topics upon which every other man speaks without reserve or mystery? He is Secretary of War, but we never heard of a Secretary of War making a profound secret of his political opinions. He is an officer of the army; but other army officers do not feel that they violate any of the proprieties of their profession by telling where they stand in politics.

Having by a pretty sure though circuitous route reached this point, the motives of his silence seem more impenetrable than ever. Why should a candidate for the Presidency refuse to tell his opinions? It would naturally be supposed that of all men in the country those who are candidates for its highest office in times when opinions are greatly divided, should be the most frank, open, and forward in declaring their sentiments, especially if they have no political record to speak for them.

Presidential Pretenses for Stanton's Removal. From the N. Y. Tribune. The President's statement of the reasons for removing Secretary Stanton is disingenuous. His real reason, as is well known, was that Mr. Stanton would not remove District Commanders like Sheridan and Sickles, who aimed to carry out the Reconstruction acts in good faith, and substitute in lieu thereof military tools like Steedman and Hancock, who would attempt to counter-legislate, in the interest of Rebels and reaction, against the acts of Congress.

England and the United States—The Alabama Claims. From the N. Y. Herald. History, it has been often said, repeats itself. The saying, it is true, does not amount to an absolute truth; but it is scarcely the less, on that account, pregnant with suggestive lessons. Pity it is that these lessons have been so often neglected by nations and by individuals.

DEPARTURE TO THE PRESIDENT BY MR. STANTON. By telegraph from the N. Y. Times. On the 20th of August, the following telegram was received from Mr. Stanton, Attorney-General of the United States, to the Hon. Thaddeus Stevens, Chairman of the Committee on Reconstruction, House of Representatives, New Orleans, La.: "I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 17th inst., and in reply to inform you that the same has been forwarded to the proper authorities for their consideration."

The only fact communicated to Mr. Stanton which was not contained in the dispatch to the President is that the Convention was sanctioned by Gov. Wells; and that fact he knew abundantly from other sources, as Gov. Wells was well known to the whole country to have been the prime mover in calling the Convention. The President knew that the Convention was called to aid in reorganizing the State on the basis of universal suffrage, after

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wards adopted by Congress. The Rebel party were seeking some means to break it up. The President wanted it broken up by some means, though he wished to dodge the responsibility of a riot by assuming the pretense of sustaining the civil authorities. He well knew that the civil authorities, especially the police of New Orleans, would be the authors of a riot, and that all he need do was to hold off the military, and the riot, i. e., the attack of the Rebel police on the Convention, would begin. He ordered the military to let them alone, and the riot began and culminated virtually according to his command.

This being his attitude, the late pretense that he had received General Baird's despatch he would have been found on the other side, and sustaining the Convention, is unwarranted.

The remainder of his communication is devoted to proving that Secretary Stanton approved his reconstruction policy and disapproved the Tenure-of-Office law as unconstitutional. It is not claimed that these views of Mr. Stanton formed any part of the reasons for his removal, and they are only brought forward to impeach his political consistency, and diminish the respect of his friends. The President's efforts in this direction are equally disingenuous.

This reliance on white suffrage only being the vital blunder in the President's policy, it follows that Stanton approved it wherein it was well enough, and with considerable sagacity foresaw and disapproved its blunder. On the point of the Tenure of Office bill, the President's imputation is more severe if not more just, provided the President states the case correctly. There is this apology for Mr. Stanton on this point, however, viz., that, though he believed the act to be unconstitutional before it was passed, he may, as a lawyer, very properly have held it to be his own and the President's duty to obey it when passed until it should be declared invalid by the Supreme Court.

England and the United States—The Alabama Claims. From the N. Y. Herald. History, it has been often said, repeats itself. The saying, it is true, does not amount to an absolute truth; but it is scarcely the less, on that account, pregnant with suggestive lessons.

Great Britain and the United States have allowed themselves to drift into a position which, to say the least, is ominous of war. The original cause of quarrel, if good sense and reason had been allowed to prevail, might easily have been got over. The stubbornness of England, however, has mightily aggravated the difficulty, and it is now extremely difficult to foresee to what disastrous conclusion this small cause of quarrel might lead.

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ment or of the British press during our late civil war—a civil war which ended so gloriously for the Union, and which so marvelously revealed our resources and the power of our republican institutions. France is scarcely less culpable than England, but we have already had our revenge in that quarter. We have seen her eat humble pie quite to our satisfaction, and there are few who will refuse to admit that she waddled down the hill a little more quickly and a little less to her own comfort than she waddled up. It is England's turn to eat humble pie now, and our advice to her is to avoid a collision with the great republic by paying down the Alabama claims at once.

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